United Nations E/2005/NGO/26

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 June 2005

Original: English

Substantive session of 2005
New York, 29 June-27 July 2005
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Statement submitted by the Istanbul International Brotherhood and Solidarity Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

05-37558 (E) 210605

Statement

Background

A massive earthquake of magnitude 9.0 occurred off the West Coast of Northern Sumatra on 26 December 2004 at 0058 hours GMT. Another earthquake of magnitude 7.3 occurred 81 kms West of Pulo Kunji (Great Nicobar Islands) at 0421 GMT. These two earthquakes triggered Tsunami. A series of aftershock were reported in this region. Seven countries have reportedly been affected: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Somalia.

Present Situation

IBS sent a team to Indonesia, including the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra. The tidal waves caused serious damage to public facilities, transportation facilities (roads and bridges) telecommunications, electricity, and power in both provinces, with the worst being the capital city of Aceh, Banda Aceh. Currently, the airport in Banda Aceh is open for commercial and humanitarian flights. The first information from the Department of Social Affairs on 27 December 2004 said that 4,712 people were killed, 303 people were missing and some 50,000 people displaced due to the earthquake/tsunami. According to recent information the number has increased dramatically to 170,000 people killed 70,000 people reported missing and 400,000 people displaced.

Over a month after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Indonesian Aceh province its residents are still very much traumatized. Several refugees encountered at the Masjid Sabang refugee camp in the Jaya subdistrict of Aceh Jaya, acknowledged they still feel fearful when recalling how they had escaped death.

In order to make progress on this matter the volunteers feel they need more time than has been allotted to them by the government, which has limited their stay in Aceh only until March. They are concerned that many survivors will not receive the full care they require.

So far the work on the land route from Banda Aceh towards Meulaboh has gone as far as Lepung, Aceh Besar, only about 20% of its length, due to difficulties in the field. The road from Meulaboh to Banda Aceh has only been repaired to Tenom, Aceh Jaya.

The government opened the schools which are still usable outside Banda Aceh, including the tent schools that will reside in refugees sites.

The government is also preparing 24 relocation spots to accommodate refugees living in tents, moving them to simple buildings to live in. These buildings are being prepared by the Departement of Civics. Meanwhile, the number of refugees has reached 356,927, spreading to 59 locations.

Activities of IBS in the Field

IBS-team arrived in Banda Aceh, (North Sumatra-Indonesia) on 11 January 2005 and after assessing the situation, has started to distribute the urgent needs of IDPs such as food, medicine, drinking water, clothes and sanitary materials.

During the Muslim Celebration of Hari Raya Korban, IBS assembled some 73 cows, the meat of which was distributed to displaced people living in tents.

IBS continues supplying the mentioned materials and food when needed or requested by the people in the region.

Another very important problem area IBS is concerned with is child protection. Therefore IBS team has performed some field research regarding children that have been affected from tsunami and decided to concentrate on "Pesantrens" which are traditional boarding schools in the region.

These pesantrens have opened their doors to orphans and other affected children so that they can find shelter and continue their education at the same time. After visiting several of them, IBS has taken full responsibility for two pesantrens in Banda Aceh.

In these two pesantrens there are 950 students of which 140 are orphans or affected children.

After renovating the old buildings, IBS is now constructing a dormitory, library and kitchen for one of these two pesantrens (Darul Mutaallimin) and 10 houses for the teachers of the other one (Ulee Titi).

IBS has preferred to concentrate on pesantrens because the environment in the pesantrens is more friendly and natural than the one in orphanages.

Housing Project of Lam No

IBS has also undertaken a housing project in Lam No, a small town totally destroyed by tsunami in the south of Banda Aceh.

In coordination with other Turkish NGOs, IBS has decided to launch a housing project for 1,000 families. This project has not started yet, IBS is negotiating with a contractor who will handle the whole work in three stages.

Recommendations/Action Alert

* Employment is the most urgent need of IDPs at the moment. They need to generate their own incomes to prevent them from being overly dependent on other people. Innovative cash-for-work models are needed to open up job opportunities for IDPs, especially those who cannot return to the jobs they did previously. For IDPs who are able to return to their jobs, there is still a need for assistance in the form of equipment and start-up capital for their businesses.

* Although fewer than in the past, there are IDPs who are refusing to relocate. The reason they give is different from before; they say the barracks are too crowded, two families have to live in one barrack. In housing problems like this, it is essential to prioritize the wishes of the people. Housing should be constructed to conform to the cultural tradition of the Acehnese, health and safety requirements.

* Schooling is starting to resume, although in some locations there are still shortages of teaching staff, classrooms and uniforms. IDPs who need this assistance for educational activities are those served by Mesjid Lueng Bata humanitarian aid post; IDPs in Lhoong covered by Ipemal humanitarian aid post; IDPs in Krueng Manee served by Induk Samalanga humanitarian aid post; and IDPs in Kota Sigli subdistrict of Pidie served by the Paska humanitarian aid post.

* Several humanitarian aid posts are in urgent need of operating funds. This shortage of funding has caused them to reduce the intensity of their monitoring of IDPs on the ground. Humanitarian aid posts in need of this assistance are Al-Muslim, FKSM and Fugar.

* Although remaining IDPs have begun to work and earn wages, assistance in logistics is still needed. The IDPs are in need of: staples (rice, sugar, cooking oil, vegetables, etc), nutrient-rich foods, clothing suitable for young children (under 5), and women's things for the next 3 months. There is also a need for clean water, sanitation facilities and information.

* Some IDPs are still suffering from itching, fever and upper respiratory tract infections, so medical services are still essential.